1:Vaillant A-5 (1928-1936)1941 NU7 Aztec NU7

Bird," were the embodied spirits of young growth and, by analogy, youth and the games. These had as male counterparts such gods as Cinteotl, "Maize God," Xochipilli,* "Flower Prince" and Macuilxochitl, "Four Flower," whose functions, identified with growth, youth and games, are almost synonymous. (See Plates 31; 56, top left; 57, bottom left.)

About the maguey plant revolved another cult embracing the goddess Mayauel, who represented the plant and whose four hundred sons were associated with pulque. According to some accounts, the various styles of drunkenness were recorded in terms of these gods or their associated animal, the rabbit. Four hundred rabbits stood for complete drunkenness, while fifteen or twenty suggested mere conviviality. The chief of these pulque gods was called "Two Rabbit," after his day in the almanac, and another, Tepoztecatl, was the tribal god of Tepoztlan, honored by a temple placed high in the mountains of Morelos.

The gods of the earth and death were highly important, since growth takes place in the earth and the dead are received there. The sun on rising seems to be born in the earth and at its setting to be hidden by it, thus passing apparently to the world of the dead. The gods and goddesses associated with the earth had significance for the solar cults as well as for growth and fertility.

Tlaltecuhtli, "Lord of the Earth," was depicted as a male monster of horrifying aspect, partaking of the attributes of a toad and an alligator. His open mouth could consume even the sun, since the setting sun passed into the earth, according to Aztec astronomical ideas. The goddesses, however, seem

*Sho-chee-pe'e-ly.

1:Vaillant A-5 (1928-1936)1941 NU7 Aztec NU7

ing was pictographic and was arriving at the stage of syllabic phonetics, which is an important part of the hieroglyphic writing of Egypt. There was no alphabet, but a picture of an animal or thing could be combined with the picture of another animal or thing to give a third meaning in terms of its sound value, much like our method of rebus writing. We could write: "I can be hospitable," in terms of the sounds given to pictures of an eye, a tin can, a bee, a horse, a hole in the ground and a table. The Aztecs wrote the name of their capital by drawing stone *tena* from which sprouted a nopal cactus, *nochtli*, or the town Pantepec, by drawing a flag, *pantli*, on a conventionalized hill, *tepec*. Color, position, puns and abbreviations all contributed to recording sounds by this means. Conventionalized signs, like footprints to show travel or movement, a shield and club for war, a bundled corpse for death, gave simple connotations of action.[19] (See Fig. 2.)

Aztec writing offered no way of making general statements or expressing abstract ideas. Yet the full accounts of historical events, set down after the Conquest in Spanish or Nahuatl, indicate that oral traditions, possibly learned as a chant or saga, supplemented these ideographic records.

Their numerical system was vigesimal. The Aztecs counted by twenties where we count by tens. They indicated quantities up to twenty by the requisite number of dots, although in the Mixteca this method was abridged by using bars to represent groups of five. The Aztecs used a flag to indicate twenty, repeating it for quantities up to four hundred, while a sign like a fir tree, meaning numerous as hairs, signified four hundred (20 × 20). The next unit, eight thousand (20 × 20 × 20), was indicated by a bag, referring to the almost innumerable contents of a sack of cacao beans. (See Fig. 2.)

1:Vaillant A-5 (1928-1936)1941 NU7 Aztec NU7

802

FIG. 2. AZTEC NUMBERS AND METHODS OF ENUMERATION

a. one, a dot or finger b. twenty, a flag c. four hundred, a sign denoting hairs d. eight thousand, a bag e. ten masks of precious stone f. twenty bags of cochineal dye g. one hundred bags of cacao h. four hundred bales of cotton i. four hundred jars of honey of tuna j. eight thousand leaf-bundles of copal gum k. twenty baskets each containing one thousand six hundred ground cacao nibs l. four hundred and two cotton blankets of this type

A post-Conquest manuscript shows devices that may not have been of native origin but European adaptations of the Aztec system. For example, fractions are shown by blacking in segments of a quarter, a half or three quarters of a disk. Similarly fives and multiples of five are indicated by coloring the requisite spaces in the flag of the sign for twenty, and hundreds by showing the proportionate lines in the four-hundred symbol.[20]

175 Aztec histories consisted of annals of ancient times, contemporary events, year counts, accounts compiled yearly, specific records for each year, books of each day and day-by-day counts or diaries.[21] Some of the ancient and contemporary histories have been published, but none of